

Claim(s)

[0041] Having thus described the preferred embodiment(s), the invention is now claimed to be:

1. A method of administering a commercial transaction carried out over a communications network used for shopping, said method comprising:

(a) receiving a shopper at a first web-site maintained on the communications network, said shopper having an affinity group associated therewith;

(b) forwarding the shopper to a second web-site maintained on the communications network;

(c) obtaining a generated click-through fee related to the forwarding of the shopper to the second web-site;

(d) distributing a portion of the obtained click-through fee to the affinity group associated with the shopper; and,

(e) communicating to the shopper how much was distributed to the affinity group.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
communicating to the affinity group the shopper's identity whose activities led to the distribution.

3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
determining an amount of purchases made by the shopper at the second web-site; and,

determining the generated click-through fee based on the amount.

4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
determining where the first web-site receives the shopper from, and based thereon determining which affinity group is to be associated with the shopper.

5. A method of conducting commercial transactions on a communications network to raise funds for affinity groups, the method comprising:

- (a) receiving shoppers at a first web-site on the communications network, each shopper being associated with one of a plurality of affinity groups;
- (b) forwarding each shopper to a selected one of a plurality of second web-sites maintained on the communications network;
- (c) obtaining generated click-through fees related to the forwarding of the shoppers to the second web-sites;
- (d) on behalf of each shopper, distributing a portion of each obtained click-through fee to the respective affinity group associated with that shopper; and,
- (e) communicating to each shopper how much was distributed to their associated affinity group on their behalf.

6. The method according to claim 5, further comprising:
communicating to the affinity groups the respective shoppers' identities whose activities led to each distribution.

7. The method according to claim 5, further comprising:
providing each shopper with a choice of second web-sites;
receiving an indication of each shoppers choice; and,
in step (b), forwarding each shopper to their respective choice of second web-sites.

8. The method according to claim 5, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

9. The method according to claim 5, further comprising:
determining which affinity group each shopper is associated with.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the affinity group associated with each shopper is determined to be the one whose web-site the shopper is received from in step (a).

11. A shopping portal comprising:
mean for maintaining a presence on a communications network such that shoppers employing the communications network can be received;
means for identifying received shoppers;
means for forwarding shoppers to selected shopping sites maintained on the communications network;
means for monitoring forwarded shoppers activities at the shopping sites to which they are forwarded;
means for obtaining click through fees based upon the monitored activities of shoppers at the shopping sites to which they were forwarded;
means for distributing a portion of each obtained click through fee to an affinity group associated with the shopper responsible for generating the click through fee;
and,
means for reporting to shoppers an amount distributed to their associated affinity groups by the distributing means.

12. The shopping portal according to claim 11, further comprising:
means for communicating to the affinity groups the identity of the shopper responsible for each distribution made by the distributing means.

13. The shopping portal according to claim 12, wherein if the identifying means does not identify a received shopper that is responsible for a distribution being made by the distributing means, then the communicating means indicates that the distribution is made anonymously.

14. The shopping portal according to claim 13, wherein the forwarding means permits shoppers to choose which shopping site they are forwarded to from a plurality of different shopping sites.

15. The shopping portal according to claim 14, wherein the portion distributed by the distributing means is based upon an amount of purchases observed by the monitoring means.

16. The shopping portal according to claim 15, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

17. The shopping portal according to claim 11, further comprising:
means for a representative of an affinity group to create a customized shopping portal for the affinity group.